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ABSTRACT

New Caledonia, a French territory (population 153,500) is the only Pacific island with a plurality European population (60,000), mostly French. There are also 17,300 Polynesian migrants and some Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indonesians living there. The South Pacific Commission Library holds 60,000 volumes and provides library services to the Francophone population. The main party of the Kanaks, the native Melanesians, decided in 1985 to boycott the state-run schools and established a chain of 46 primary schools. Official schools are operated by both the state and churches under the supervision of the Department of Education. The educational system is similar to that of metropolitan France. Only one non-European child out of seven goes on to high school. There are five institutions of higher education on the island. The bibliography contains 12 items written in English that relate to education in New Caledonia. (JB)

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EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES IN NEW CALEDONIA: GENERAL INFORMATION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MATERIALS

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EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES IN NEW CALEDONIA:

GENERAL INFORMATION

Population 153,500 in 1987 estimate. New Caledonia is a French overseas territory, and the only Pacific island with a plurality (60,000) European population, mostly French. 17,300 Polynesian migrants, and some Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indonesians also live in New Caledonia. The Native Melanesian (Kanak) call for independence and the negative response of the other groups has lead to considerable violence in recent years. Most of the French population is now concentrated in the capital city, Noumea.

The South Pacific Commission, set up in 1949 by colonial governments for the social and cultural development of the region, used to sponsor irregular training programmes for librarians. The South Pacific Commission Library holds 60,000 volumes, 20,000 monographs and 400 current periodicals. The library sends Commission documents to some libraries in the Pacific area, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States.

Bibliotheque Berman, the oldest South Pacific library, opened in 1901, and provides public and childrens' library services to the Francophile population. The library holds 80,000 volumes, and contains historical and ethnological materials dealing with New Caledonia and the Pacific. Educational and library services outside of the capital are now restricted by Kanak insurrections in rural areas. The main Kanak party, FLNKS, decided in 1985 to boycott the State-run school system, and established a chain of "ecoles populaires kanakes." FLNKS claimed to operate 46 primary schools, with a enrolment of 1,500 at the beginning of 1986.

Official schools are operated by both the state and by churches under the supervision of the Department of Education. The French government finances the state secondary system. The educational system is similar to that of metropolitan France: five years of primary education and four years of lower secondary education are followed by a division of upper secondary schools into vocational and academic tracks.

In 1984 there were 278 primary schools, 41 secondary schools, and 37 technological and higher institutions. Total enrolment was 52,289 pupils. A smaller percentage of Melanesian children remained in the system through upper secondary school in 1982 (7.4 percent) than did Europeans (16.8 percent), Polynesians (21.1 percent) or Asians (23.3 percent). Only one non-European child out of seven goes on to high school. Europeans comprise nine tenths of those who complete high school or university. Adult literacy was 91.3 percent in 1980 amongst the European population.

Five institutions of higher education operate, with 600 students in 1985 enroled in programmes in teacher-training, law, French civilization and culture, advanced technical fields, and commercial and business administration. Work began in 1981 on a new Universitie Francaise de Pacifique in Noumea, due eventually to serve 1,500 students. The university opened in March, 1989, with 238 students enrolled. The Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers, attached to an institution with the same name in Paris, reported having 500 students. About 100 students attend universities in France.

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